DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 091 921 EC 062 159

AUTHOR	Lubovsky, V. I.
TITLE	Special Education [Fifth Chapter of "Education in the USSR"].
PUB DATE	72
NOTE	13p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS	Comparative Education; *Exceptional Child Education; *Foreign Countries; *Handicapped Children; *Special Schools
IDENTIFIERS	*Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; USSR

ABSTRACT

Described are special education provisions provided by the Soviet government for handicapped children. Noted is the low incidence of handicapped children (said to be the lowest in the world) due to medical practices designed to prevent disease. Reviewed are the historical development of special education since the revolution and the commitment of the Soviet government to the education of handicapped children. It is explained that handicapped children are educated in special boarding schools for the deaf, hard of hearing, blind, partially sighted, mentally retarded, speech handicapped, motor handicapped, or multiply handicapped. Mentioned are criteria for acceptance at the special schools and the provision of general education, vocational training, and guaranteed jobs to all children of special schools. Explained is education of teachers in departments of defectology and the remuneration which is 25 percent higher than that received by teachers of normal children. Stressed for the retarded are individualized instruction and development of good work habits. Stressed for the deaf is language and speech development through use of specialized equipment and techniques. Stressed for the blind and partially sighted is compensation for the disability through use of optical or tactile aids. Stressed for the deaf and blind are self-care skills and communication skills. Emphasized as a focus in all special schools is vocational training. Also noted are research efforts in diagnosis and treatment of handicapping conditions. (DB)

ED 091921

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRO
DUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM
THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGIN
ATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRE
SENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

V. I. Lubovsky

SPECIAL EDUCATION*

The various measures taken by the Soviet State towards raising the living and working standards of its citizens and developing the public health system, including the great network of establishments concerned with disease prevention, have resulted in significant progress in overcoming many of the causes of abnormal development in children. Of especial importance are the care of mothers and infants, care of the working woman and the network of women's consultation centres; paid maternity leave that covers the last two months of pregnancy and the first two months after the child's birth; children's polyclinics which are responsible for an infant's health from the day he is brought home from the hospital, etc. One figure alone bespeaks the scope of the work being done: during an infant's first year of life he must have 16 obligatory medical examinations by various specialists. In the Soviet Union these preventative measures have all but eradicated a number of diseases which formerly caused many

* A. P. Gozova, T. N. Golovina, E. N. Martsinovskaya and T. V. Rozanova took part in preparing this chapter.

ED 091921

abnormalities and still are the cause of handicapped development in capitalist countries. Thus, for many years there have been no outbreaks of German measles (rubella) among pregnant women, which is a primary cause of congenital deafness and other abnormalities.

A thorough check of all medicaments on the market makes it impossible for such occurrences to take place in the Soviet Union as the abnormalities in children caused by the use of thalidomide, as happened in the capitalist countries of Europe and the United States.

The percentage of handicapped children in the Soviet Union at present is the lowest in the world. However, there are still many causes which contribute to abnormal development in children that have not yet been eliminated. There are injuries at birth, illnesses of the pregnant woman, serious illness in early childhood, congenital defects, etc. All this makes it necessary to create special conditions, a network of special schools, for the education of handicapped children.

The education of handicapped children in the USSR is part of the state educational system. A few months after the Great October Socialist Revolution, the state took upon itself the care of handicapped children, which, in pre-revolutionary Russia, had been chiefly the domain of private or philanthropic establishments, and transferred them to the People's Commissariat of Education.

On December 10, 1919 in a decree signed by Lenin, the Council of People's Commissars determined the functions of the various People's Commissariats in regard to the education and medical care of physically and mentally handicapped children. In accordance with this decision, retarded children were to be cared for and educated in the so-called auxiliary schools, while blind, deaf and physically handicapped children were to attend corresponding special schools of the People's Commissariat of Education. Children with nervous and mental disorders were to be cared for in sanatoria-schools, convalescent schools and other special establishments of the People's Commissariat of Health. Severely retarded children were to be cared for by the establishments of the People's Commissariat of Social Security.

In time, a unified system for bringing up and educating handicapped children was created. This network of special establishments has been under constant improvement.

In 1931 the People's Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR issued an order "On the Introduction of Universal

Elementary Education for Physically Handicapped and Mentally Retarded Children and Teenagers, as well as Those with Speech Defects". Public organisations, including the All-Russia Society of the Blind and the All-Russia Society of the Deaf and Dumb, have played an important part in carrying out this order.

On the eve of the Second World War all handicapped and retarded children in a number of large cities of the USSR were fully cared for by the special school system and in many regional and territorial centres this task was close to being realised.

At present blind children and those with severely impaired eyesight receive a complete secondary education in the course of 12 years of study. Deaf and 2nd division hard of hearing pupils are given the same period to acquire the curriculum of the eight-year secondary education, while 1st division hard of hearing children accomplish the programme of the ordinary ten-year secondary school in 12 years.

There are special evening secondary schools for working adults who are blind, partially sighted, or deaf or hard of hearing.

Auxiliary schools (for mentally retarded children) with an eight-year term of study provide an elementary education and give the children vocational training.

In the late 1940s speech therapy rooms were opened in many normal secondary schools as an aid to their pupils with speech defects. Beginning with 1962, special schools were established for children with severe speech defects (alalia, aphasia, complicated tongue-tie, etc.).

There are also special secondary schools for children with disturbances of motor function and a special school for children who are multiply handicapped.

Preschool establishments for the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind, the mentally retarded and children with speech defects have been developing successfully in the past decades.

Prior to entering school all children who have reached 6 years of age must have a thorough medical examination by a team of specialists at their district children's polyclinic. This examination is compulsory for every child entering school. Children who have serious defects of vision, hearing or speech and who will find studying in a normal school too difficult are referred to a special school. These special schools have their own admission boards consisting of a children's

psycho-neurologist, a speech therapist, a member of the administration of the special school and, when necessary, an ear, nose and throat or an eye specialist. These specialists do not only examine the child carefully, they analyse his entire case history. On the basis of this study the board determines the degree of his disability and the type of establishment he is to be referred to.

Schools for the deaf accept children who are completely deaf and dumb, as well as children who react to loud sounds but who do not differentiate between the sounds of speech or can discern only disparate vowels. Schools for the hard of hearing accept children who understand normal speech at a distance of no more than 3 metres and who, as a result of defective hearing, subsequently suffer from under-developed speech.

Schools for children with speech defects accept children with grave defects of speech who have normal hearing and are not mentally retarded.

Schools for the blind accept children who are totally blind, who have a loss of eyesight up to 0.04 which cannot be corrected by eyeglasses, as well as children who have retained a greater percentage of vision but complicated by a severe limitation of visual scope. Schools for partially sighted children accept children whose loss of eyesight is from 0.05 to 0.2 when corrected by eyeglasses and who possess a sufficient scope of vision.

Schools for children with disturbances of motor function accept children of normal intelligence suffering from cerebral palsy, the after-effects of polio and other muscular disabilities.

Auxiliary schools for the mentally retarded accept children who have made no progress in a normal school for one or two years, and who, after a medical and pedagogical examination, are certified to be mentally retarded (as a result of a disability of the central nervous system), as well as children who have not attended a normal school and are referred to the auxiliary school by a psycho-neurologist. A thorough study of children who consistently make no progress in a normal school and who are therefore sometimes referred to an auxiliary school, has made it possible to distinguish a special group of children with a weakened nervous system, whose retardation is of a temporary nature. It has been proved that this temporary state of retardation can be overcome when the children are cared for and taught under

special beneficial conditions. Children whose slow progress in normal schools is due to ill health, lapses in their studies or other reasons, and not to organic deficiencies of the central nervous system, are not eligible for auxiliary schools. This temporary slow development and lag behind in school is compensated for by extra tutoring within the normal school system.

Children of all special schools receive a general education and vocational training and are guaranteed work after leaving school. For those teenagers who, due to serious disabilities, cannot assume full or limited employment, there are sheltered workshops for the handicapped.

All special schools (with the exception of some auxiliary schools in large cities) are boarding-schools. This guarantees the most favourable conditions for the children's development. Boarding-school children are supplied with everything they need, including textbooks, clothing and shoes. Tuition, as in normal schools, is free, and parents pay (as determined by their salaries) only for their board.

The number of children in each class of a special school is significantly less than in a normal school, with the groups usually consisting of from 12 to 16 pupils. Apart from the regular teaching staff there is a large staff of counselors who care for the children after lessons, supervise their homework, walks, clubwork, recreation and games. Thus, the well-ordered schedule of life in a boarding-school is wholly directed towards improving each child's development. Every special school also has its own staff doctors. The close contact between the doctors and teachers is extremely beneficial.

Life and study in the boarding-school not only provides general knowledge, it prepares the pupils to take their place in society as self-sufficient, productive citizens. To begin with, the pupils are taught self-care; then they work on the school plot, learning to function as a group. This helps to develop their abilities. Most important, it helps them to develop as individuals.

Upon graduating from a special school physically handicapped children can continue their studies at technical schools (thus, some technical schools have special departments for the deaf), art schools or studios and at university-level schools. There are teachers, engineers and research workers among the graduates of schools for the deaf and the blind. Academician L. S. Pontryagin, an outstanding Soviet mathematician, graduated from the Moscow School

for the Blind: O. I. Skorokhodova, a Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences who is deaf, dumb and blind, is a senior research worker at the Moscow Research Institute of Defectology.

Thus, handicapped children have the greatest possible opportunities, with due regard for their disabilities, to develop as would any normal child, to receive a general education and vocational training, to take an active part in the life of society. By special decrees of the Soviet Government all restrictions upon the political and civic rights of the handicapped that existed in pre-revolutionary Russia have been abolished. Moreover, their working and living conditions are of a privileged nature. Besides, there are state pensions for handicapped and retarded children and teenagers. Thus, the law has made it possible to establish wholesome relations between handicapped children and normal children and society.

The teachers for these special schools are trained in defectology departments (or sections) in teachers' colleges. The number of these departments is growing. Several years ago they existed only in such cities as Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, while now there are close to ten such departments in teachers' colleges throughout the country. Students of the defectology departments receive stipends that are 50 per cent higher than those received by students of other departments of the teachers' college, while teachers on the staffs of special schools and preschool establishments for the handicapped receive salaries that are 25 per cent higher than those of the staffs of normal schools.

The development of the network of special schools and the training of teachers for these special establishments is not an indication of a growing number of handicapped children but of the more differentiated care now available to them in specialised establishments.

Each basic type of special school or preschool establishment has its own specific needs and cares.

The auxiliary school provides for the mentally retarded a general education comparable with normal elementary school; its corrective educational work improves their psychological and physical condition; it corrects speech defects, teaches the children to be self-sufficient and prepares them for life in a socialist society, as well as providing them with a trade or a profession within the framework of their special curricula.

The principle of a differentiated, individual approach is the credo of the auxiliary school in educating mentally re-

tarded children who differ greatly both in degree of retardation and in other peculiarities of psychological development. Special emphasis is placed on the preschool period of training, during which the groundwork is laid for the future education and upbringing of mentally retarded children. Much time in the elementary grades is devoted to arts and crafts. The curriculum of the auxiliary school is based on the principle of corrective education and upbringing. That is why, while all the subjects are within the child's range, they are also intended to make the greatest possible use of his intellectual and physical abilities and to further his development.

In view of the importance the development of good working habits has for mentally retarded children, the older children of the auxiliary school spend close to 40 per cent of their study periods in workshop practice. The children are given a technical background of the subject, they work in the school shops and receive on-the-job training. Upon graduation, special tests determine their degree of skill. Classes in music, art and physical training, which help to reveal and develop the retarded pupil's interests and potential abilities, are of great importance.

An intensive study, based on the work of the auxiliary schools, is now under way. It will determine ways and means for the further pedagogical and psycho-pedagogical assessment of the peculiarities of development of the mentally retarded child; the educational principles and methods in teaching general educational subjects; workshop training, etc. There is an intensive reseach for new audio-visual aids and other measures are being introduced to facilitate the learning process. Much is being done in the field of moral education, in studying relationships between the pupils of the auxiliary schools, through group study, work, games, etc.

Schools for the deaf teach a child his native language on the basis of the principle of communication. Everything is done to teach the child to understand direct speech, and the use of fingerspelling is instrumental. The basic means of communication between deaf children during the first stage of their education, fingerspelling, as their knowledge of the spoken and written language increases, in time becomes an auxiliary means, which aids in the better assimilation of the spoken language and a more accurate (as compared with lip-reading) understanding of direct speech.

The study of hard of hearing children has made it possible to determine the specific means necessary for their speech development. Unlike deaf children, the hard of hearing have proved to be able, on the basis of an oral understanding of direct speech, to acquire a small active vocabulary, though they do not fully articulate the words. Schools for the hard of hearing aim to create the necessary conditions for the maximum development of the pupil's limited speech. The curriculum and teaching methods in these schools call for systematic training in the basic components of language (vocabulary, phonetics and grammar). These schools have classes in pronunciation, lip-reading, corrective grammar and sound and letter practice. Individual tutoring is of special importance in developing the child's ability to hear.

One of the stages of this corrective work is preschool training and education, which make it possible to achieve good results in overcoming and preventing secondary defects.

In the past decade fingerspelling has been widely introduced in preschool establishments for the deaf. This has had a definite effect, both on their general development and in forming good speech patterns.

At present, special emphasis is being placed on the all-round clinical study of preschool age children who have hearing disorders, and on developing methods for the earliest possible diagnosis of these disorders. In studying these children, the degree of their impairment is taken into account, as well as their scope of vision, space perception, ability to think, personality and behaviour.

The deaf or hard of hearing child's ability to understand direct speech with the help of visual or tactile analysers has made it possible to draw up a special curriculum and methodological guide for teaching lip-reading and developing the child's hearing.

In reviewing the problems connected with teaching pronunciation, a new approach was developed concerning the influence of phonetic factors on oral speech. These studies have produced a new method of teaching correct pronunciation to the deaf.

Various audio-visual, tactile and vibrating aids were designed to control pronunciation. In particular, these are the apparatuses of "visible speech".

These apparatuses make it possible to correct the speech defects of the deaf and hard of hearing when they are not

discernible to the person himself. These aids are of help both in teaching the correct pronunciation of sounds and in developing correct inflection and intonation.

There are sound amplifiers that supplement whatever percentage of hearing a child has retained.

As shown by special studies, the number of totally blind children among those with vision deficits has been decreasing constantly. At present they comprise, on the average, no more than 10.1 per cent of this number. The other 89.9 per cent have residual vision. There are different types of schools for the various disorders of vision. The most important aspect in teaching children with impaired eyesight is the compensation of their impairment.

Within the system of special schools for the blind, studies are being conducted and ways and means of correcting their impairment are being sought through the use of audio, factual, motor and other types of perception. There is a new understanding of the great potentialities of sensory development. As a result of these studies, new ways and means of differentiated training and education have been devised. Special programmes and curricula have been worked out for blind and partially sighted children.

The study of peculiarities of graphical image perception by the blind helps to elaborate the system of blind children's training in "reading" of pictures and technical drawings and to design what may be regarded as substitutes of visual aids. Proceeding from the peculiarities of the process of compensation in blind and partially sighted children, special devices have been designed which transform visual patterns into acoustical or tactile signals manageable by the blind. A new reading machine which converts printed lines of regular text to Braille is based on this principle. It makes it possible to read a complete line instead of reading each letter separately, which increases a person's reading speed considerably.

Schools for children with impaired vision are equipped with various optical aids to correct their eyesight including line magnifying glasses which step up the reading rate by 50 per cent, which is important in protecting their eyesight, as well as in precluding any secondary defects in their physical development.

On the basis of studies conducted in the 4- to 6-year-old age group of blind children concerning perception peculiarities, concrete and spacial notion formation, development

of thought and speech, a system of sensory, intellectual and physical preschool education of the blind was built.

The system of teaching deaf, dumb and blind children and teenagers is a very specific one. Their education begins by learning self-care elementary habits. The child's first means of communication with others are gestures that represent objects and actions. Fingerspelling is then taught. In time, verbal speech in fingerspelling form becomes the predominant form of communication. Once a child has mastered the fingerspelling designation of a certain number of objects, he begins to learn Braille.

At present everything possible is being done to overcome and prevent speech defects, both in the special and in normal schools. To this end, the various causes and types of speech defects are being studied.

The relationship between defects of oral speech and poor progress in learning to write has thus established that the progress a child makes in reading and writing in many ways depends upon his speech development. This knowledge has resulted in a unified system of combating defects of speech, writing and reading. It has been introduced in the school system and has shown good results.

Special preschool establishments were created to help children overcome various forms of speech defects at the earliest possible age.

The special school for children with severe speech defects is a new type of educational establishment. Formerly, such defects as alalia, aphasia, pseudo-bulbar disarthritis, etc., were treated by physicians. Speech therapists have revealed the complex ties that exist between vocabulary, grammar and phonetics in speech, as well as the relationship between speech defects and a child's psychology.

One of the main tasks of all types of special schools is to prepare the pupils for socially useful work in later life. On-the-job training in the special schools provides the necessary skills and corrects and compensates their physical and mental disabilities. Workshop classes in all types of special schools are based on the same principle. However, the more severe the defects of pupils of a given school, the more specific is their training.

The present educational level in the special schools and the shift of vocational training to the higher grades has made it possible to extend considerably the choice of trades available. Formerly, blind pupils learned only such simple

trades as brush-making, basket-weaving, etc. Today they are taught metal-working, radio repair, electric wiring, etc. At the same time, total blindness or impaired eyesight has made it necessary to use special devices and methods in teaching blind children.

No longer are the deaf limited to a small number of trades. The experience gained in schools for the deaf has proven that many modern industrial and agricultural trades can be fully mastered.

The mentally retarded are not capable of choosing their own vocation. Thus the school must study each individual child and teach him the trade he will be able to master.

Aided by special equipment the teachers and medical staff jointly solve all problems of compensating and correcting the disabilities of handicapped and retarded children.

Psychological studies of these children are extremely important in the work of the special schools. It has been established that there is usually more than a primary disability present (such as deafness), since it is the cause of a number of secondary psychological disabilities. Thus, a child who has become deaf in infancy cannot master speech without special training; however, even given special training, a deaf child learns very slowly. This in turn affects his overall development as an individual.

These psychological studies are directly responsible for the new methods and content of teaching in these schools. In this way, research in teaching deaf children their native language (vocabulary and grammar) has made it possible to work out a definite curriculum in grammar (textbooks, teaching methods, etc.). The results have been promising. Studies in the field of vocational training for all groups of abnormal children have made it possible to prepare these children for taking their places in society, to make them appreciate the need for socially useful work, to give them skill in their chosen trade.

The joint efforts of psychologists and teachers who classify the mentally disabled children provide for the timely correction and, when possible, complete compensation of the psychological disabilities of pupils of special schools.

In recent times more attention has been paid to clinical and psychological studies of abnormal children. This includes electroencephalography (registering the electrical activity of the brain) and studies of the nervous system which

have made it possible to define more clearly and classify the various types of mental retardation. A number of studies deal with environmental and congenital factors as the causes of mental retardation.

The electrical activity of the brain is also studied in cases of ear and eye disabilities. The connection between the degree of eye disability and the nature of the electroencephalogram has been established, as have several specific peculiarities of the latter, which make it possible to follow the various compensation processes that take place in the body of the blind child.

In diagnosing deafness and blindness a study of the physiology of the abnormal child's sensory organs is very important. In the course of these studies a number of objective methods for measuring the degree of ear and eye sensitivity were evolved.

Methods of treating disturbances of motor function that have resulted from polio or cerebral palsy and of restoring co-ordination are being perfected. When used together they produce good results in compensating the various disabilities.

The psychological, clinical and physiological studies of Soviet speech clinicians have been widely acclaimed abroad. Many Soviet studies in this field have been translated and published in Great Britain, the USA, Japan and a number of other countries. Soviet speech clinicians have presented important reports at a number of international congresses and conferences.

All scientific research work in this field is conducted through the joint efforts of such research centres of the Soviet Union as the Scientific Research Institute of Defectology of the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of the USSR, the departments of defectology of the many teachers' colleges, and the departments of defectology affiliated with scientific research institutes of pedagogics and psychology of a number of Union Republics. The Institute of Defectology is a major scientific research centre with a large staff of pedagogues, psychologists, physicians, physiologists and engineers. This makes it possible to make a comprehensive study of various forms of disability and to work on the problems connected with the education, upbringing and the vocational training of handicapped and retarded children. This institute is the only one of its kind in the world with such a broad scope of activities in the field of special education.

The high level of development of the system of special

education in the Soviet Union has attracted the attention of foreign specialists in the field. The contacts between scientists are broadening and an extensive correspondence and exchange of scientific literature on problems of special education are maintained with many countries of the world.

M. N. Kolmakova

GENERAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS FOR ADULTS

The Soviet Union is far ahead of every other country in the scope of its adult education network. Approximately 4,500,000 persons in the Soviet Union combine work and studies in evening and correspondence general education schools. Over one million persons received a secondary or 8-year education in these schools in 1970. Nearly 5,000,000 persons are enrolled in the country's 22,000 People's Universities and several million attend various educational courses.

From the very first days of Soviet power the education of the adult population was established as a question of national importance. The Soviet nation's heritage from tsarist Russia was an adult population that was predominantly illiterate: three-quarters of the population from the age of 9 up could neither read nor write. No economic transformation of the country, no social progress was possible before illiteracy was liquidated and the general educational level of the population was raised.

That is why the Party Programme, adopted by the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) in March 1919, established as one of the major tasks in the field of education "the overall as-